1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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115 There were both "wild" and "village" Veddas even in the days of his youth, and the only difficulty experienced with the old man was in keeping the two classes perfectly distinct in his mind. The following facts were elicited in the course of three interviews, each lasting somewhat less than an hour. He stated that he was just able to walk when he came to the Eastern Province, and that as he grew up he spent much of his time with the Veddas hunting and collecting honey. The [156] Veddas of those days were a merry people, and with a most eloquent gesture the old man showed how they would throw dry leaves into the air and shout and dance for happiness; he said also that they were absolutely truthful. Every Vedda carried a 411 bow and arrows and an axe; more arrows than one were carried, but it was not clear that they only carried two; it seemed that *tudaši*, a word that the old man said was used to describe the number of arrows carried, may have meant a small quantity or may have been a hunting term corresponding to "brace" or "leash." The old man had seen Veddas shoot lying on their backs and holding the bow with their feet, but this was only for amusement and to show their skill, no serious shooting was done in this way. The feathers of peacocks, herons and hawks were especially used in feathering arrows; any of these [262] birds would be shot with an ordinary arrow, and peacock was eaten as was jungle fowl, though no one would eat porcupine or buffalo; for these abstinences he could give no reason. Traps 226 were not used. Fish were eaten, being caught by poisoning the 278 water of pools with the bark of *damba*, *nahapata*, *puruljan* (? *Entada scandens*) and the fruit of *timbiri* (*Diospyros embryopteris*) and *kukuruman* (*Adenanthera bicolor*). Pots and bark 415 cloth bags were made and betel pouches of monkey skin, though even then some village Veddas had cloth betel bags, and these occasionally reached the wilder Veddas. Among the village 304 Veddas both sexes bored their ears and the women wore ivory 301 studs in them; whether the women of the wilder groups bored 184 their ears and wore these ornaments was not clear, certainly 372 the men did not. Fire was obtained from two pieces of wood by drilling.

342 The wilder Veddas of those days built no houses but lived
437

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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and "tame" Veddas, and to come to more recent times, there is evidence that a hundred years ago there were organized communities of house-building Veddas, while certain Veddas received grants of land from the Sinhalese kings, and on these lived as definite village communities until quite recently, probably till within the last half century. 184 361

Village Veddas of Uva Bintenne.

Dambani. The present community of Dambani, in the jungle between Kallodi and Alutnuwara, may serve as an example of a village Vedda community. Some twenty families living in tolerably built houses keep buffaloes and cultivate chena, the latter being big enough not only to supply their own wants, but to permit of a lively trade with Sinhalese traders. These Dambani folk have been known to the Arachi of Belligala as a flourishing community in the same social condition for the last thirty years, and he states that they were in this condition in his father's time. A short visit was sufficient to show that here was a community which, though it had lost many Vedda beliefs, still retained others, and was so strong and independent that there was little likelihood of its immediate fusion with the surrounding population. Physically these people (Plate XV, figure 2), though somewhat darker and often of a stouter build than the Danigala Veddas, could not be mistaken for Sinhalese. The Dambani people are unfortunately "show" Veddas, that is to say, people who have been sent for so often by white visitors that they have learnt certain tricks, which they show off directly they see a European, and so constantly demand presents that serious work with them is an impossibility. 621 [177] [142] [609]

A positive advantage which has, however, arisen from this condition, is that these folk have kept up the remains of the so-called Vedda language. The headman in whose district these Veddas are situated is largely responsible for this, for he always speaks to them in their own dialect in harsh tones. He is an extremely kind old man, and answers definite questions perfectly truthfully, yet like so many Sinhalese, he generally says only what he thinks is expected of him, hence, the belief in the fierce sullen ways of the Veddas and their inability to laugh has been [197] 622 156

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1981
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unconsciously fostered by him. A brief account of our visit to Dambani will best show the present condition of these people.

While in the jungle we were suddenly met by four Veddas, who greeted the Arachi in a deep and apparently fierce tone, he returning the greeting in the same manner. To our surprise these men came up to one of us (C. G. S.), shook hands, and then turned and led us to their village, on the way to which we passed a couple of "tame" buffalo that tried to charge us. There were three huts in the village and the headman's wife—not at all shy or diffident—after shaking hands took one of us (B. Z. S.) by the arm and led her into a hut. This had a good roof and walls of sticks, only one side being closed by bark slats, it was full of pumpkins and other chena produce, which were however soon removed. We then sat down to take vocabularies, as the talk going on around us sounded quite different from Sinhalese and they professed not to understand our interpreter who was unable to follow them. So we spoke through the Arachi. The headman's wife brought us each some honey and yams and commanded us to eat. We sucked the honey comb, but that did not satisfy her and she tried to feed one of us (B. Z. S.) with yams herself and to pour water down her throat. After giving us a few Vedda words, the Vidane (headman) began to talk very angrily and then stalked out of the hut. He complained that we had not given him presents and refused to speak another word until we gave him something. Other men came into the village making a total of about 10 or 11 grown men and some boys, but only two middle-aged women, the wife of the Vidane and another, so it was evident that there were other huts in the neighbourhood. We told the Vidane that our carriers would bring presents and made him and a few other men come back to the hut. But after every two or three words there were more angry protests and our interpreter explained that "other white men had not treated them so." When they raised their voices their talk sounded fierce, every word being shouted with emphasis and accompanied by scowling looks. Then we found out from the Arachi that these like the Danigala Veddas were "show Veddas" who had been utterly spoilt by presents from "distinguished visitors," some of whom

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-6 (1907-1908) 1911
AES Vedda AES

Things new to them which we showed.

152 523 them often provoked peals of laughter; to see the eldest and most venerable man solemnly have his thumb nail pressed by a brass machine (algometer) was particularly amusing to the rest of the community, one man actually rolling on the ground with laughter. The old man took it all in excellent part and smiled indulgently. Doubtless Veddas vary much in character, but all except the "show" Veddas are genial and courteous, and have always been rightly considered truthful. At Sitala 153 Wanniya Handuna was the most intelligent man, keenly in- 554 terested in all the new things we showed him; he obviously 156 ruled the community by force of character, coupled with the fact that he was a shaman. Nila, however, was also a shaman, but he was obviously not so strong a man as Handuna, to whose opinion he deferred, and naturally took second place. Vela, half-brother of Handuna, was extremely shy but by no means stupid, he generally tried to get out of doing things, professing inability, but when urged by Handuna did everything as well as the other men. Kaira, *Aasa* (son-in-law) to Handuna, was intelligent and talkative and inclined to be boastful. Pema, *Aasa* to Nila, did not speak much, chiefly we thought because he was a young man and had not much to tell, for although he did not chatter like Kaira he smiled and did not hang his head when addressed, as Vela did.

Whether staying in a "private" or "communal" cave the 342 family life continues in much the same manner. If in a com- 592 munal cave, each family keeps strictly within its own limits, 621 the women may always be seen at exactly the same spot, and 423 when the men come in they sit or lie beside their wives, keeping to that part of the cave floor that belongs to them as carefully as though there was a partition dividing it from that of their neighbours. Figure 2 is a plan of Pihilegodagaige showing the actual division of floor space. Food is frequently 621 cooked by one woman and shared by all the members of 422 the community, in fact, although it might be cooked separately, it did not seem that any food was private property. One other fact was very noticeable in communal caves, namely, that men never kept their bows and arrows in their own division, but always put them all together in a particular

5: Spinal 2D-8 (ca. 1920) 1948 AX8 Vedda AX8

were loath to purchase their intimacy with gifts. Time enough for that, when we had won them over by less humiliating means. Besides, these Veddas were evidently spoilt, and we wished to show them they were not the important personages they imagined themselves to be.

"We are going then," said Handuna. It was now our turn for dejection. Was it for such an ungracious issue we had travelled so far?

I had a last card, having brought some neosalvarsan, a sovereign remedy for yaws so rife among these people. The offer was received with indifference. There was only one case among them, they said, and the patient was too ill to come. This being just what we wanted, I offered to visit them the next morning.

"You cannot come where we live unless we allow you," said the irrepressible Kaira. "And we won't show you our caves or anything, unless you give us presents."

Sick with exasperation and disgust at the behaviour of these impossible children, I told them they could take our offer or leave it as they chose, and turned to other work. The result was a grudging acquiescence; and, leaving a guide behind, they went away.

A word of explanation regarding the sophistication of a people so remote. They were in fact about the purest-blooded Veddas extant; indeed, it was to this very circumstance they owed their disappointing behaviour; for it had attracted Seligmann among them. What that implied may well be imagined. To obtain the valuable sociological information with which his book abounds, he had gained the confidence of these folk with scrupulous consideration and kindness, showering on them gifts of all kinds. Moreover, the patient investigation of the most intimate details of their lives by such a man, heightened their self-esteem. Of this we had an amusing illustration. I was obliged to admonish a group of Sinhalese that embarrassed us with their attentions. A Vedda sidled up and, tapping me familiarly on the shoulder, whispered, "Those people don't like us, they are jealous of us. We and you gentlemen are one; they are different!"

To dismiss these Veddas as spoilt uninteresting folk would imply failure to discern their innate simplicity, beneath the veneer of pose and importunity, for which contact with an indulgent stranger had been responsible. In their homes they still are as artless as their forbears were before ever white man set foot on these shores.

We were out hunting early that afternoon, when a sudden snapping sound arrested our attention. The Vedda we were with listened a few seconds. "Catching *talagoyas*," (monitor-lizards), he said laconically. The excited barking of a dog and rebuking human voices soon confirmed his conjecture. Going up, we found two men, one of whom carried a large quivering monitor just killed; while two dogs, still spirited with the chase, danced round their victim and growled and snapped at us. One of the men now set about to disjoint the quarry's tail at the middle, leaving it connected only by a tag of sinew; then, slitting the submandibular web, he rove the tail through till it locked at the division, making the reptile eat its own tail as it were, and carried it neatly in a loop. The monitor is best hunted at high noon; after four in the afternoon it takes to trees and holes.